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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKEY STILL WANTS DOSTUM TO STAY IN AFGHANISTAN

REF: A. KABUL 303  
[B](#). KABUL 399  
[C](#). KABUL 1504

Classified By: Ambassador William Wood for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

[1](#). (C) SUMMARY. A visiting Deputy Undersecretary from the Turkish MFA told the Ambassador Turkey may host General Abdul Rashid Dostum for a temporary stay for medical treatment in the near future. But they still oppose a lengthy exile for the Uzbek warlord and prefer he stay in Afghanistan to play a productive role in the country's political system. The Ambassador doubted Dostum would be a stabilizing force and urged he not be in the country during the presidential election campaign next year. The Turks will relay the Ambassador's points to officials in Ankara and encourage Dostum to keep a low profile.

Turks Still See Limited Role For Dostum  
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[2](#). (C) Feridun Sinirlioglu, MFA Deputy Undersecretary for the Middle East, South Asia and Iran, met the Ambassador Sept. 14 to discuss Afghan politics and Turkey's historical connections to Turkic ethnic groups, particularly Uzbeks, in northern Afghanistan. Sinirlioglu said he planned to meet Dostum, still under loose house arrest in Kabul (ref A), the following day. We understand Karzai refused Sinirlioglu's request for a meeting.

[3](#). (C) Sinirlioglu said the Turkish government believes Karzai is the only credible leader in Afghanistan, but he needs to reach out to other groups. Sinirlioglu did not believe Dostum would be a candidate in next year's elections. But, he agreed that Dostum would seek to use the 10 percent of the vote he won in 2004 to his advantage in the 2009 election.

[4](#). (C) The Ambassador said a Karzai effort to win Uzbek support by associating with Dostum would be problematic, a view not unique to the U.S. government. A better solution would be to find a comfortable exit for Dostum from Afghan politics. Sinirlioglu said many Afghan Turks were critical of Dostum, but respected their home-grown leader. Sinirlioglu stressed that Turkey does not advocate an expansion of Dostum's role in Afghan politics.

Drying Out in Turkey  
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[5](#). (C) Although continuing to oppose hosting Dostum in

permanent exile (ref B), Sinirlioglu said the general may soon travel to Turkey for alcoholism treatment. Sinirlioglu stressed this would only be a temporary stay. The Ambassador pointed out the benefits to Afghanistan's stability if Dostum were out of the country during the run-up to the presidential elections and offered to support such a compromise. Sinirlioglu said the Turkish government still held out hopes Dostum could use his influence positively in the Afghan elections.

#### Dostum's Influence in Junbesh

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¶6. (C) Sinirlioglu said the Turks had advised Junbesh party leaders to gradually ease Dostum into an "honorary place" and move forward with democratic reforms. The Ambassador said the U.S. did not consider the Junbesh party conference in June a success and believed Dostum allies won out over reformers in less-than transparent circumstances (ref C). Sinirlioglu disagreed, saying he felt the current Junbesh leadership had adequate distance from Dostum. Reformist candidates for the party leadership had voluntarily withdrawn from the race.

WOOD